



TO: John McDonough, City Manager

FROM: James E. Tolbert, Assistant City Manager

DATE: February 9, 2017 for Submission onto the Agenda of the February 21, 2017 City Council Regular Agenda

ITEM: Final approval of the City of Sandy Springs Comprehensive Plan (Next Ten)

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***Recommendation:***

Staff recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the resolution adopting the 2017 Comprehensive Plan.

***Background:***

On December 6, 2016 the Mayor and City Council authorized the submission of the Comprehensive Plan to the Atlanta Regional Commission and to the Department of Community Affairs for their review and approval. That approval was received this week and the plan is ready for adoption by the City Council.

***Discussion:***

The Department of Community Affairs approved the Plan with no requested changes. The Atlanta Regional Commission approved the plan with several slight reference corrections requested in the Appendix regarding state water regulations. Those corrections have been made and the updated plan is on the TheNext10.org website. In addition language was added to the Roswell Road Small Area Plan clarifying that in the northern redevelopment areas replacement of multi-family rental apartments would be allowed. That language is also in the updated document.

To adopt the plan the City Council should adopt the resolution attached to the memo. This will include the requested changes by the ARC and the updates to the Roswell Road SAP.

***Alternatives:***

The Council could choose to not adopt the Plan or make additional changes.

***Attachments:***

1. Resolution
2. ARC Letter





**STATE OF GEORGIA  
COUNTY OF FULTON**

**APPROVAL OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND SMALL AREA PLANS**

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and City Council initiated a process to prepare a new Comprehensive Plan and Small Area Plans (“Plans”) in July, 2015; and

**WHEREAS**, the Plans have a planning horizon of twenty-five (25) years that have been branded the “Next Ten” to focus on the second ten years of the City’s growth and development; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and City Council appointed an Advisory Committee to assist in the development of the Plans; and

**WHEREAS**, Public Hearings were held by the Sandy Springs Planning Commission on November 17, 2016, and the City Council Meeting on December 6, 2016; and

**WHEREAS**, many public forums and small stakeholder group meetings were held and a website developed with over 9,300 unique site visitors; and

**WHEREAS**, the planning team and decision-makers have reviewed both the Regional Water Resources Plan covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria(O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration when formulating our plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission have recommended approval of the Plans to the Mayor and City Council;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANDY SPRINGS, GEORGIA**

That the Mayor and City Council of the City of Springs, Georgia, hereby approve the Comprehensive and Small Area Plans for the city of Sandy Springs..

**APPROVED AND ADOPTED** on this the 21st day of February, 2017.

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Russell K. Paul, Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael D. Casey, City Clerk  
(Seal)

February 6, 2017

Mayor Rusty Paul  
City of Sandy Springs  
7840 Roswell Road  
Building 500  
Sandy Springs, GA 30350

RE: 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update

Dear Mayor Paul,

ARC has completed the regional review of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update for the City of Sandy Springs. We are pleased to inform you that the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has determined that the update is in compliance with the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

Renewal of Qualified Local Government (QLG) status is contingent on local adoption of the plan update. Prior to adoption, please consider the enclosed comments received during the review. The update may then be adopted at any time. Once adopted, please send ARC digital copies of the adoption resolution and the final, "as adopted" plan update document so that we may forward them to DCA. Upon receiving notice that the update has been adopted, DCA will renew the City's QLG status.

I commend you and the City of Sandy Springs for your commitment to the planning process. Please contact Andrew Smith at (404) 463-5581 or [asmith@atlantaregional.com](mailto:asmith@atlantaregional.com) if you have any questions or if we can provide further assistance.

Sincerely,



Jon Tuley, AICP  
Senior Principal Planner

Cc: Michelle Alexander, Community Development Director

## Andrew Smith

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**From:** Jon West <Jon.West@dca.ga.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 03, 2017 1:34 PM  
**To:** Jared Lombard; Andrew Smith; Jonathan Tuley  
**Cc:** PEMD OPQG Administration  
**Subject:** Sandy Springs Plan Update Approval

Jared, Andrew and Jon,

Our staff has reviewed the comprehensive plan update for the City of Sandy Springs and determined that it adequately addresses the Minimum Standards for Local Comprehensive Planning. If you have any questions about our comments, please contact us at 404-679-5279. As soon as your office provides written notice that the plan has been adopted and provides DCA with a digital copy of the final adopted version of this document, we will award Qualified Local Government status to the local government.

Thanks,



Learn more about our commitment to [fair housing](#).

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**Jon A. West, AICP**  
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**ARC Natural Resources Division Comments  
2016 City of Sandy Springs Comprehensive Plan Update  
January 23, 2017**

The ARC Natural Resources Division has the following comments on the City of Sandy Springs' 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update:

**Appendix E. Consistency with the Regional Water Plan and Environmental Planning Criteria (PDF Page 647):**

While the information presented in this appendix on specific regulations is correct, its presentation of regulations is confusing and incorrectly ties together regulations that are based on independent legislation. While they share goals, both the 2001 Water District enabling legislation and the 1973 Metropolitan River Protection Act are completely separate from the Part 5 criteria required under the 1989 Georgia Planning Act. We recommend addressing this confusion, starting with the Appendix title. Because the term "Regional" can lead to confusion between the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, which is a separate organization, and because the Metropolitan River Protection Act is separate from both the District and the Part 5 Planning Criteria, we recommend that the Appendix be retitled as:

**"Consistency with the Water District Plans and Other Environmental Regulations".**

**Page 648, First Paragraph:** As stated above, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District plans are not part of the Georgia Planning Act Part 5 Environmental Planning Criteria. Although both are relevant to this section, they are separate sets of regulations required under two different legislative Acts and need to be addressed separately. We recommend removing the reference to the Water District in the second sentence of this paragraph and revise it to read as follows:

"The City of Sandy Springs development regulations follow the State Part 5 Environmental Planning Criteria of the Georgia Planning Act."

We also recommend adding the following sentences after the third sentence of the paragraph:

"The City development regulations also achieve consistency with the applicable requirements of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Plans as well as the requirements of the Metropolitan River Protection Act and the Chattahoochee Corridor Plan."

**Page 648, Third Paragraph:** We recommend changing this paragraph to read as follows:

"The following provides a summary of the basis for the City's consistency with the Water District Plans, the Metropolitan River Protection Act and the Part 5 Environmental Planning Criteria."

## **ARC Natural Resource Division Comments**

### **2016 City of Sandy Springs Comprehensive Plan Update**

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**Page Two**

**Page 648, Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Plan and Ordinances, First Paragraph:** The first sentence should read as follows:

“The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District has developed the following water management plans for the 15 counties and 93 cities under its jurisdiction, including the City of Sandy Springs:”

The first bullet following this sentence should read: “Watershed Management Plan”

**Page 649, Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Plan and Ordinances, First Paragraph:** The paragraph should read as follows:

“Further, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District has established the following goals:

1. Support Sustainable Economic Development
2. Improve and Protect Water Quality
3. Equitably Distribute Benefits, Responsibilities and Costs
4. Define Practical, Integrated Measures for Local Jurisdictions
5. Promote Public Education and Awareness

The District also has established policies to promote intergovernmental coordination for all water issues in the District”.

**Page 649, NEW HEADING: “River and Stream Protection”:**

To differentiate between the Part 5 Criteria and the Metropolitan River Protection Act and District Stream Buffer ordinance, we recommend addressing river and stream protection separately. This would entail moving text from later sections to this one. This is the wording we suggest below the new heading:

“The north and west boundaries of the City of Sandy Springs are formed by the Chattahoochee River. The land within 2,000 feet of the River and its Bull Sluice Lake impoundment are part of the Chattahoochee River Corridor, which was created by the Metropolitan River Protection Act. Passed by the Georgia Legislature in 1973, the Act required the adoption of a protection plan for the Corridor, which extends from Buford Dam to the downstream limits of Fulton and Douglas counties. The Chattahoochee Corridor Plan, which is implemented and enforced jointly by the Atlanta Regional Commission and the affected local jurisdictions, including Sandy Springs, includes limits on land disturbance and impervious surfaces, buffers and setbacks along the river and certain tributaries, and requirements in the river floodplain.



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**Page Three**

In addition, the City has adopted a Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance (Sandy Springs Code Chapter 14, Article 6, Section 4 & 5 - Stream Buffer Protection, December 13, 2005), which is the equivalent of the Water District Model Stream Buffer Ordinance referenced above. The ordinance requires a 50-foot undisturbed vegetative buffer and an additional 25-foot setback on all streams as defined by Section 3 of the Ordinance. These buffers do not supersede, but work in concert with the buffers required under the Chattahoochee Corridor Plan.

In addition, all state waters in the City are subject to the 25-foot Georgia State Sedimentation and Erosion Control Buffer. That buffer is 50 feet along the Chattahoochee, as it is a designated trout stream.”

**Page 649, Section 391-3-16-01: Water Supply Watersheds:**

Add “**Part 5 Criteria,**” to the title: “**Section 391-3-16-01: Water Supply Watersheds:**”

Delete the second and third paragraphs.

**Page 649, Section 391-3-16-02: Groundwater Recharge Area:**

Add “**Part 5 Criteria,**” to the title: “**Section 391-3-16-02: Groundwater Recharge Area:**”

**Page 650, Section 391-3-16-03: Wetlands:**

Add “**Part 5 Criteria,**” to the title: “**Section 391-3-16-03: Wetlands:**”

**Page 650, Section 391-3-16-04: River Corridor Protection:**

The two paragraphs in this section can be deleted. The River Corridor Protection Section of the Part 5 Criteria states, in Section 391-3-16-04(2)(i), definition of “protected river”, that “those segments of river covered by the Metropolitan River Protection Act or the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act are specifically excluded from the definition of a protected river.” Because the entire length of the Chattahoochee in Sandy Springs is under the Metropolitan River Protection Act, and because there is no other stream in the City with an average annual flow of at least 400 cubic feet per second (the definition of a “protected river” in this section), this part of the Part 5 Criteria does not apply anywhere in Sandy Springs.

If the section stays, “Part 5 Criteria,” should be added to the title, and the definition referenced and explanation used in the preceding paragraph should be incorporated into the text.



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Atlanta, GA 30324-3330  
404-848-5000

January 25, 2017

Andrew Smith  
Senior Planner  
Atlanta Regional Commission  
40 Courtland Avenue  
Atlanta, GA 30303

**Re: 2016 City of Sandy Springs Comprehensive Plan Update**

Hello Andrew,

The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) has reviewed the submittal for the 2016 City of Sandy Springs Comprehensive Plan update. Our suggested comments are based upon our review of the Small Area plans section of the Comprehensive Plan with respect to the North Springs MARTA Station and the future Northridge MARTA Station.

The North Springs Station Small Area plan proposes that the MARTA-owned property, which includes the station and the undeveloped +/-14-acre tract, be redeveloped for transit oriented development (TOD) to accommodate a mix of uses. The plan specifically prescribes mid-density residential uses such as 50 to 100 townhomes, condominiums, small scale liner commercial/retail in the north parking deck, enhanced pedestrian/bike connections, and an ecological preservation/park. In addition, the plan places an emphasis on owner occupied units instead of rental units.

The strategic goals for TOD at MARTA include: 1) To generate greater ridership - a natural consequence of clustering mixed-use development around stations and along corridors; 2) To promote a sustainable, affordable and growing future for the people of the metro area; and 3) To generate a return on MARTA's transit investment- through enhanced passenger revenues, greater federal support, and development on MARTA property.

MARTA's TOD Guidelines currently classify the North Springs Station as a collector station. We envision that this station would transition to a commuter town center station with suggested density ranging from 25 to 75 units per acre once the GA-400 Transit Initiative is implemented. The Small Area Plan for the North Springs Station is not compatible with the standards for density and use set forth in the TOD Guidelines for a commuter town center station.

The Comprehensive Plan does provide a general framework for TOD. MARTA commends the City's intention to rezone the property to incentivize development. However, greater compatibility with our strategic goals for TOD could be attained if the station was zoned in a manner that permitted the development of a mix of uses that achieve the highest densities possible given the topographical limitation of the site. Secondly, the site entitlements should also be flexible enough to allow the market to determine the ownership status of the residential components. These two items would allow MARTA an opportunity to better align with our third strategic goal for TOD. In addition, there are goals in the Comprehensive Plan that support this opinion, including:

- Policy LU-B1- Encourage and incentivize a higher density mix of uses at and around existing and future MARTA stations to leverage transit assets while reducing reliance on single occupancy vehicles.

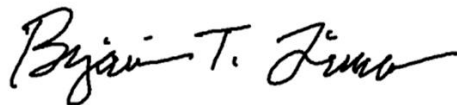
- Policy H-B1- Increase the supply and range of housing choice for middle income households. Provide more housing while offering a range of housing choices-including small-lot single family homes, cottages-style housing, townhomes, and multi-family- so that more homes are attainable to working professionals and families seeking to live in the city. Incentivizing workforce housing by offering density bonuses, height bonuses, reduced parking requirements, and reduced minimum unit sizes to developers.

Through our TOD program we seek to provide a range of housing choices such as workforce housing, senior housing, and market rate housing options. Requiring homeownership would make it more difficult for MARTA to align with not only our TOD Policies but also the policies stated by the Sandy Springs Comprehensive Plan.

As it relates to the Northridge Station Small Area Plan, we agree with the plan's classification of the future station as a neighborhood station. Neighborhood stations have a suggested density that ranges from 15 to 50 units per acre with building heights that range from 2 to 10 floors. The plan does provide for these development characteristics. MARTA supports the City's recommendation that the Northridge Station be a part of an integrated mixed-use development.

Should there be any questions from your office, please do not hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Benjamin T. Limmer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Benjamin" being more prominent and the last name "Limmer" following in a similar style.

Benjamin T. Limmer, AICP  
Assistant General Manager  
Planning Department  
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